

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - September 12, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam of the Southern District of California and Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice, announced that Bernard Lawrence Russell, a resident of San Diego, California, was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in San Diego by the Honorable John A. Houston to serve 37 months in prison, followed by 4-6 months in a halfway house, and three years of supervised release, the terms of which include registering as a sex offender. In addition, the Judge ordered the defendant to pay \$25,000 in restitution to benefit Filipino victims of child exploitation offenses, based on Russell's conviction for traveling in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a juvenile.

In connection with his guilty plea on April 22, 2005, Russell admitted to traveling in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a juvenile in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2423(b). Russell further admitted that on October 15, 2002, he traveled from San Diego, and arrived in the Philippines on October 17, 2002, with the intent to engage in a sexual act with a juvenile who had not attained the age of 16 years.

According to court documents, several interviews of Filipino children were filed with the Court prior to Russell being sentenced. One interview of a Filipino girl describes how she was introduced to Russell by a pimp in Manila shortly after Russell arrived in the Philippines on October 17, 2002. After she told Russell that she was 13-years-old, Russell paid her approximately \$30.00 to go to a motel and engage in various sexual acts. Another interview documented how Russell paid \$20.00 to a 14-year-old Filipino girl to engage in sexual acts with him on October 26, 2002.

Also provided to the Court prior to the sentencing were 32 images of child pornography which special agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security seized from Russell's residence during the execution of a search warrant on May 15, 2003.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Carla Bressler of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California, and Trial Attorney Damon King of the Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. The case was investigated by the San Diego office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security.

DEFENDANT

BERNARD LAWRENCE RUSSELL

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Travel with Intent to Engage in Sexual Act with a Juvenile
Title 18 U.S.C., Sec. 2423(b)
Maximum Penalty per count: fifteen years in custody

INVESTIGATING AGENCY

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security